MARVEL

028

SPURRIER
LAISO
ROSENBERG

RATED T

STAR WARS™ DOCTOR APHRA

WORST AMONG EQUALS
Part III

Rogue archaeologist Doctor Aphra is on the run! Implanted with a proximity bomb, she's forced to stay close to her nemesis, the psychotic droid Triple-Zero, or they will both face an explosive death!

It's all part of a grand experiment by the evil Doctor Cornelius Evazan, who watches from afar as Aphra blunders through the many dangers of the ultra-lawful Imperial world Milvayne. Their only hope is to reach the one specialist who can safely remove the bombs before the timer runs out!

But with a resurrected Tam Posla on their trail, thanks to his possession by a Force-powered fungus, things don't look good. And it seems that another old frenemy of Aphra's is back from the dead....

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BEETEE-ONE.
OH! MY DEAR FRIEND! CUT TO RIBBONS AND REASSEMBLED BY A DULL-WITTED DO-GOODER! HOW YOU'VE SUFFERED!
THAT FRIGHTFUL POLICEMAN. DO YOU KNOW, TAM POSLA LACKS EVEN THE MANNERS TO REMAIN DEAD? AND YET HE EXPECTS YOU TO TURN AGAINST ME!
IN THE NAME OF ALL WE'VE SHARED! ALL THOSE MOONLIT ATROCITIES!
SHOW HIM HOW WRONG HE IS.
TRIPLE-ZERO! GET DOWN!
BLEEP

Milvayne City.
Underworld.

FWOOSH

AAAAAA--

AGAIN WITH THE *DOWWWN!*

OH DEAR.

CLNK ZNK KLT

YOU...YOU HEAR *THAT?* HE'S AUTO-FABRICATING NEW *AMMO*. GIVES US A *MINUTE*, MAXIMUM. W-WE GOTTA FIND *VULAADA*, TRIP!

SHE'S THE ONLY WAY WE CAN GET TO THIS *PROFESSOR* GUY AND GET THESE *BOMBS* DISAR--

DON'T BE RIDICULOUS. YOUR BRAT RAN OFF AT THE FIRST SIGN OF TROUBLE. MERELY ONE MORE REMINDER, DOCTOR, THAT IN THIS WRETCHED GALAXY--

--BETRAYAL IS THE ONLY CONSTANT.

HKK! WH-WH-WHAT'S *P-PULLING* US B-BACKWARD?

HRR. BEHOLD, SINNERS, A TRUTH YOU HAVE BOTH FAILED TO GRASP:

IN *THIS* WRETCHED GALAXY, THE ONLY *CONSTANT* IS *THE FORCE.*

AAARGH!
OH, IT'S... IT'S YOU GUYS.
GREEEEAAAAT.
I STILL THINK THE THERMAL FLECHETTES WOULD'VE BEEN BETTER AGAINST YOUR BASIC REANIMATED CORPSE, NOKK.
THAT'S WHY YOU'RE THE BAGMAN, WINLOSS, AND I'M THE HUNTER.

THEY'RE MONSTER HUNTERS. WE HAD A--A SORT OF--DISAGREEMENT-- A WHILE BACK--
WOULD IT BE AN EXTRAPOLATION TOO FAR TO ASSUME YOU DOUBLE-CROSSED THEM?
--BUT--SEE-- THEY'RE SUPER PRINCIPLED ABOUT NOT KILLING, SO-- WE SHOULD BE FINE.
NOT KILLING? HOW'S THAT ANYTHING TO BE PROUD OF?
JUST--LET ME DO THE TALKING.
OH NO! SHE'S POINTING A GUN RIGHT AT US!
WHAT? NO I'M N--
SELF DEFENSE! SELF DEFENSE!
THERE, YOU SEE? THEY DO KILL! WHY MUST YOU ALWAYS SEE THE WORST IN PEOPLE? IT'S NOT LIKE YOU EVEN BOTHERED TO OPEN THEM UP FIRST TO CHECK.
SSS. THAT'S THE TARGET. HAND ME THE LAUNCHER, WINLOSS.
UHM. NO. NO, ACTUALLY-- I THINK I SHOULD HAVE IT.
DON'T BE STUPID, HUSBAND. THE ION-NET WAS EXCEEDINGLY EXPENSIVE! YOUR PATHETIC MAMMAL AIM WILL WASTE OUR ONLY SHOT!
S-SWEETIE, I LOVE YOU. B-BUT SOMETIMES THIS JOB'S LESS ABOUT AIMIN' AT WHAT'S IN FRONT--

CHOOM
CHOOM CHOOM
--AND MORE ABOUT WATCHIN' YOUR TAIL.
DOWN!
TOGETHER?
TOGETHER.
SKREEEEEEEE--

GO! GO GO GO!
BUT-- WHAT ABOUT BEETEE?

TRIP! HE JUST TRIED TO KILL US! HE'S NOT HIMSELF! HE'S GOT A RESTRAINING BOLT AND--AND THOSE ARE PROFESSIONAL HUNTERS AND--
--FOR PITY'S SAKE! YOU CAN'T SAVE HIM, NO MATTER HOW MUCH IT HURTS!

A-ALSO YOU ARE AN EXQUISITELY TOOLED MURDER MACHINE THAT DOES NOT DO FEELINGS. EVER.
RIGHT?

COME ALONG, THEN.

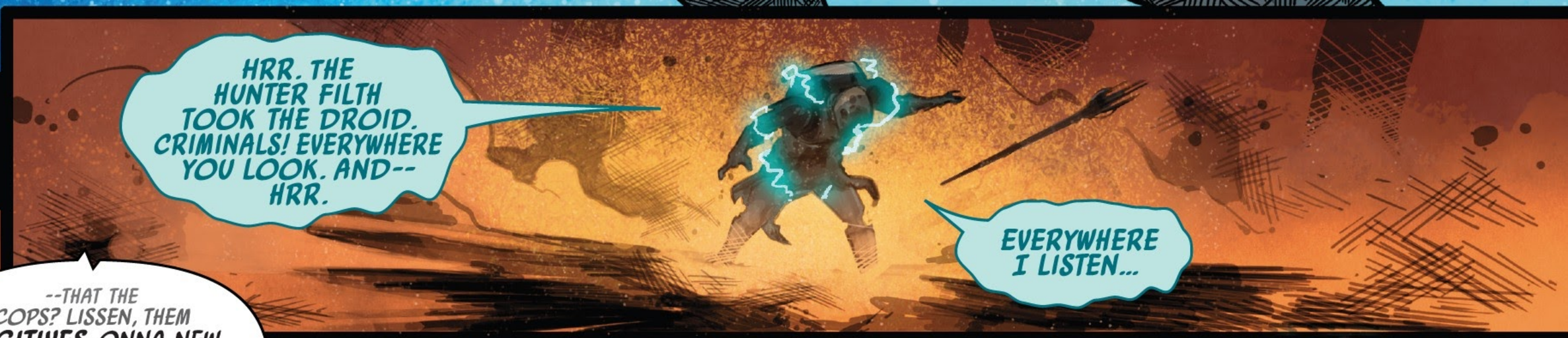
AND-- DOCTOR?
IF YOU EVER AGAIN CLAIM, WHILE IN MY COMPANY, TO UNDERSTAND ANYTHING OF "HURT"--

--I SHALL BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO EDUCATE YOU FURTHER.
HM. SEEMS THE MURDER DROID'S GOT A SORE SPOT WHEN IT COMES TO HIS LITTLE PAL...
NUUHHHRK-UT-UT.
Doctor Cornelius Evazan And Ponda Baba: Science Scum.
YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT, PONDA. EVIL DOESN'T PRECLUDE FRIENDSHIP.
THERE. TRY THAT.
AT ANY RATE-- I HAVE TO ADMIT, I HOPED FOR MORE CHAOS AND TREACHERY WHEN I FORCED THESE TWO TOGETHER.
URRRRT!
SST
HAHA! SURPRISE FRIENDSHIP BURN!
URRRRT.
MMM. QUITE SO--WE REALLY DON'T WANT THAT DAMN DROID SURVIVING TO COME AFTER US--AND THOSE IDIOT HUNTERS CLEARLY AREN'T UP TO THE JOB...
NEVER FEAR, PONDA! SCIENCE ALWAYS PROVIDES!
NEW VARIABLES! NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDY! NEW HILARIOUS CRUELTIES!
WE NEED SIMPLY STRENGTHEN OUR BROADCAST SIGNAL, RECORD A LITTLE AUDIO AND--HA...

"...WIDEN OUR AUDIENCE..."
M'LINDI-- HOW MANY TIMES CAN YOU CAN WATCH THE SAME DUMB IMPERIAL PROPAGANDA VID? CHANGE THE NET CHANNEL, HUH?
Milvayne City.
HUH. I NEVER SEEN THIS FREQUENCY LISTED BEFORE...
--UGITIVES! I REPEAT: THE INDIVIDUALS IN THIS BROADCAST ARE WANTED FUGITIVES!
JOIN US NOW TO ENJOY THEIR CLUMSY CRIMINAL MISADVENTURES--AS THEY OCCUR!
LOOK-- TRIPLE-ZERO-- I KNOW YOU'RE... ANNOYED RIGHT NOW...
AND REMEMBER, FOLKS! IF YOU CAN HELP THE COPS CATCH 'EM...
...IT'S LUCRATIVE AND ENTERTAINING!
I'D SURE LIKE TO BE STUCK WITH HER--AM I RIGHT, GUYS? HAWW!
...TRIP, I KNOW THERE'S NOBODY YOU'D LESS LIKE TO BE STUCK WITH THAN ME...
THIS NET-SCREEN WORKS! AND--LOOK! THESE LOSERS ARE STUCK DOWN HERE WITH THE CITY'S WASTE LIKE US! WE COULD PROFIT FROM THIS!
BUT--WE'VE GOT TO KEEP GOING, TRIP! WE'VE GOT EIGHT AND A HALF HOURS. WE CAN DO THIS!
ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS KEEP A LOW PROFILE.
SO STAY TUNED, FOLKS! AND REMEMBER--WHETHER IT'S A CAPTURE OR A KILL, IT ALL MEANS MONEY!
URT-HUR-HUR-HUR-HURRR!

TTHHHH...
...LIVVVNNG FORCCCCE...
...WWWWILL NNNNOT...BE DENIED...

JUSSSTICE!


HRR. THE HUNTER FILTH TOOK THE DROID. CRIMINALS! EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK. AND--HRR.
EVERYWHERE I LISTEN...

--THAT THE COPS? LISSEN, THEM FUGITIVES ONNA NEW CHANNEL? I SAW 'EM AT THE BUS STOP EARLIER! THAT'S GOTTA BE WORTH A FEW CREDS, RIGHT?
--TELLIN' YA, THAT WOMAN LOOKS JUST LIKE MY NEIGHBOR! SHE'S ALWAYS GIVIN' ME THE STINK EYE, SO YOU GOTTA COME IN GUNS BLAZING, OR--
--MET THOSE DIRTY CRIMINALS IN MY DREAMS LAST NIGHT AND THEY'RE WOOKIEES IN DISGUISE, SO--
--I'M SERIOUS! I HAVE INSIDE INFO! THE LADY'S A DOCTOR AND THE DROID'S GOT THESE--THESE KNIVES IN HIS FINGERS! AND LISTEN--FOR THE RIGHT PRICE?
B-DIP

--I CAN HELP YOU GET 'EM.
HRRR...

STOP IT.
STOP WHAT?
PLEASE DON'T INSULT ME, DOCTOR. YOU'RE SCANNING THE FOG FOR THAT BRAT.
WE WON'T MAKE IT ON FOOT, TRIP. YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY BUILT TO RUN. VULAADA PROMISED SHE'D HELP US.
JUST AS YOU PROMISED TO HAND ME OVER AS PAYMENT. AND SINCE I WOULD DISEMBOWEL YOU IF YOU TRIED, I DOUBT EITHER OF YOU WAS ENTIRELY SINCERE.
THE LITTLE WRETCH ALREADY HAS OUR MONEY. ONE WOULD HAVE TO BE INSANE TO RELY ON LOYALTY ALONE.
=SIGH= THIS IS ABOUT BEETEE--ISN'T IT? YOU CAN'T BELIEVE HE TURNED AGAINST YOU.
LOOK--I'VE SEEN THAT LITTLE MANIAC WIPE OUT WHOLE ARMIES, AND I'VE SEEN HIM BULL'S-EYE THE TINIEST OF BUGS.
WHATEVER WAS GOING ON BACK THERE? NO WAY WE SHOULD STILL BE ALIVE.
...
YOU...YOU THINK...HE DELIBERATELY LET US...
OH! WHAT AM I SAYING? THESE BULLETS MUST'VE SCRAMBLED MY CIRCUITS. YOU ALMOST HAD ME BEING SENTIMENTAL!
"LOYALTY," INDEED. ONLY AN ORGANIC COULD COME UP WITH SOMETHING SO FUNDAMENTALLY ILLOGICAL.
UH.

HEY, GUYS.
YOU STILL NEED A *RIDE?*

WE CALL 'EM **BLOATBARGES**. THE **IMPERIALS** KEEP 'EM DRIFTING ABOUT DOWN HERE.

THEY **GATHER** THE EXPENSIVE **GASES, PUMP DOWN** THE WORST OF THE **SMOG**.

UNDERWORLDERS MOSTLY JUST HITCHHIKE TO FERRY **SCAV**, BUT--HEY--

--THERE'S **WORSE** WAYS TO TRAVEL, RIGHT?

*THERE ARE SEVEN HOURS AND 53 MINUTES BEFORE I AM OBLIGED TO CAREFULLY SPRAY MY OWN **DEATH SHRAPNEL** TOWARD THE NEAREST **PERSON**.*

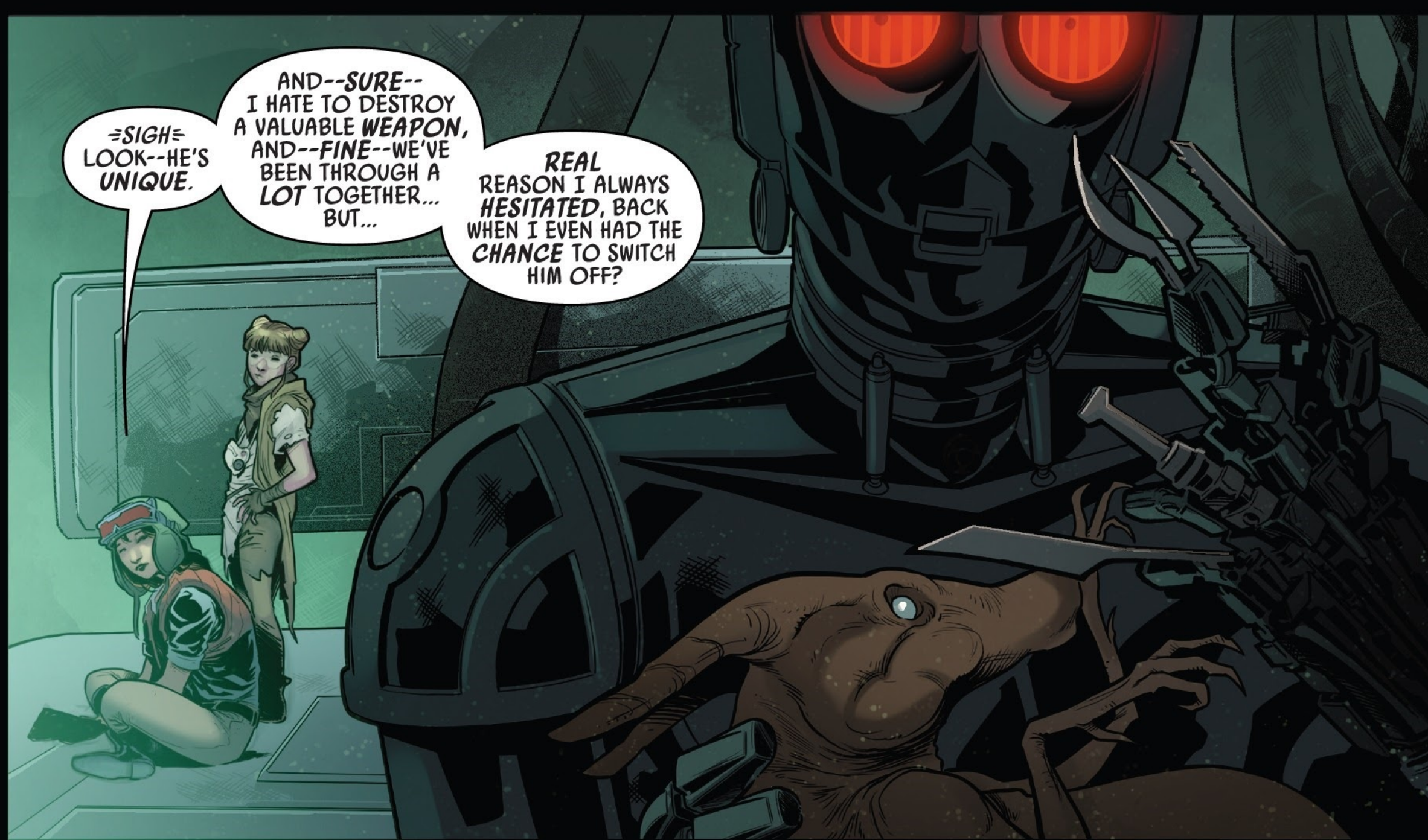
*WILL THIS PAINFULLY SLOW VESSEL SPARE **YOU** FROM THE BOMB INSIDE ME?*

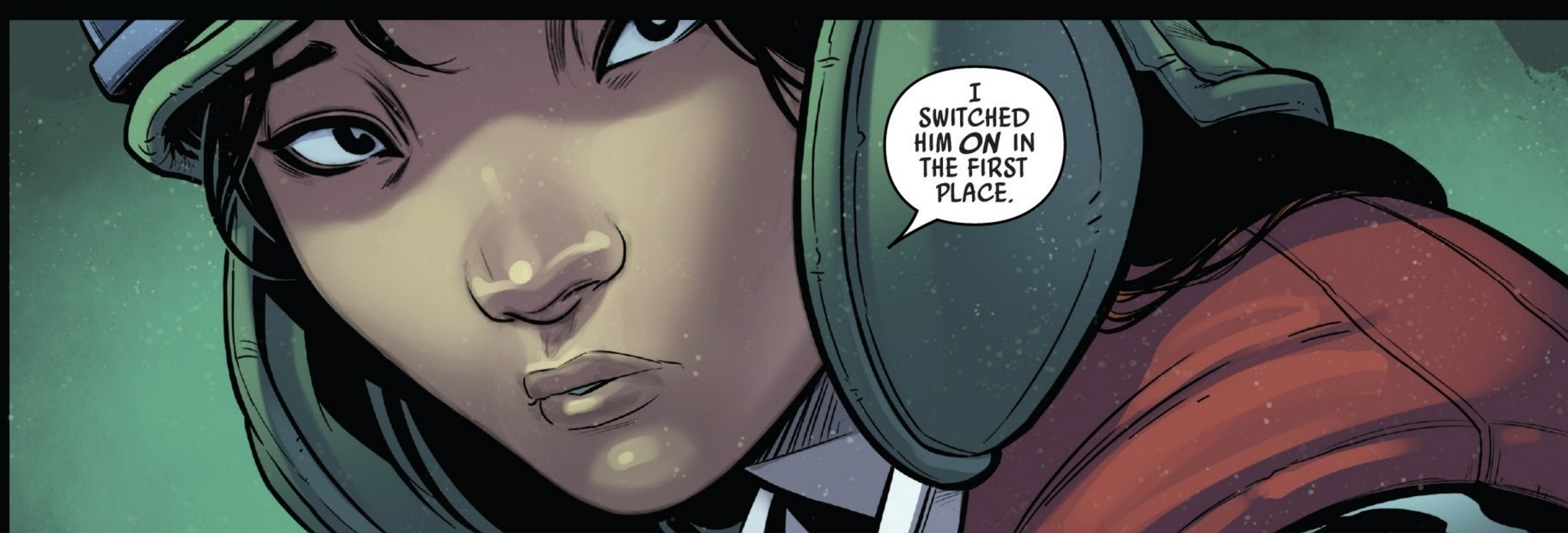
I, UH. I **THINK** SO?

I'M JUST GRATEFUL YOU CAME **BACK** FOR US, VULAADA. YOU DIDN'T **HAVE** TO DO THAT.

HEY. WE MADE A DEAL.

__DO__ EXCUSE ME. I LACK THE ORGANIC COMPONENTS REQUIRED TO __EXPLOSIVELY VOMIT__. I BELIEVE I SHALL FIND SOME __VERMIN__ TO TURN __INSIDE OUT__ INSTEAD.





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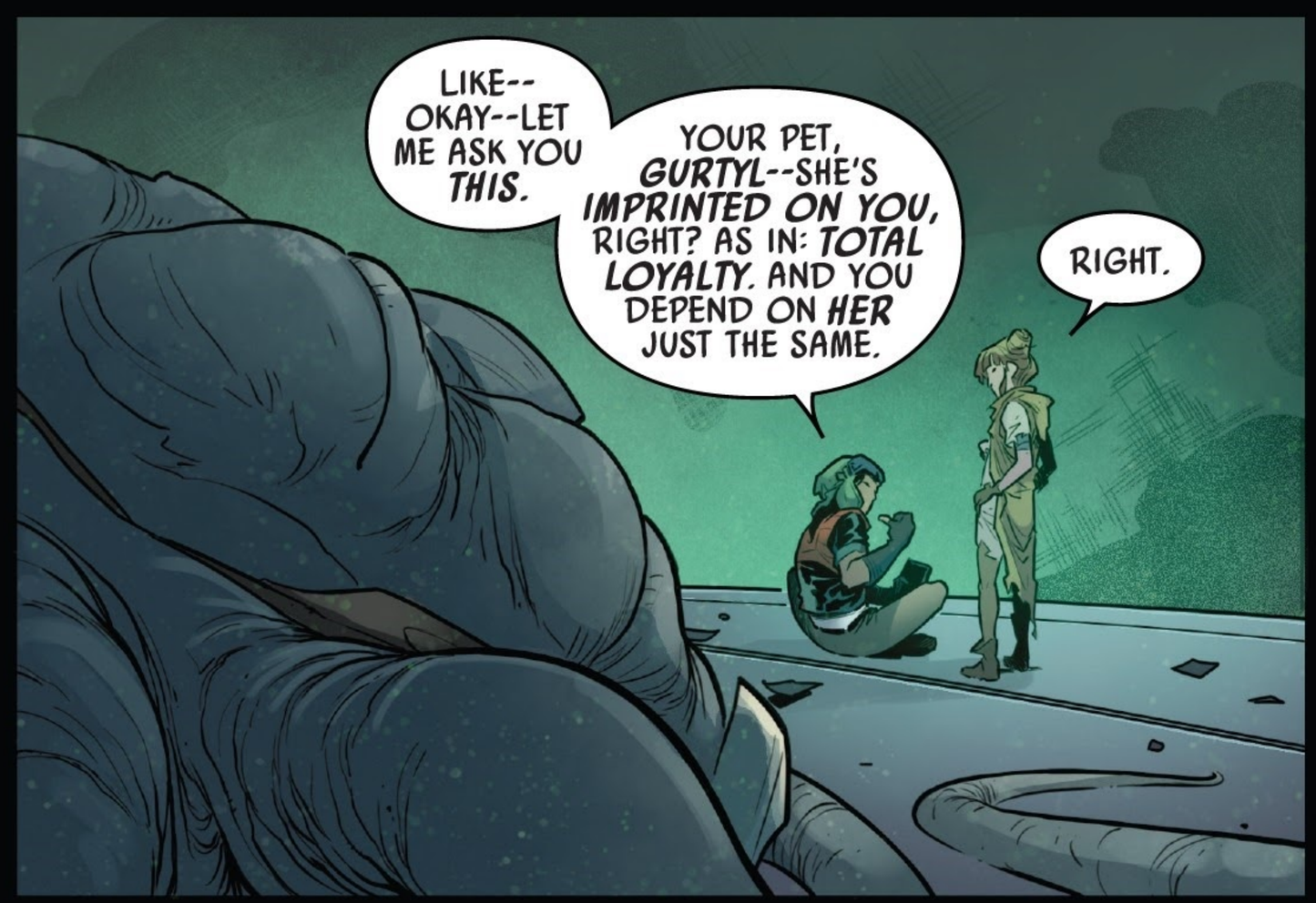

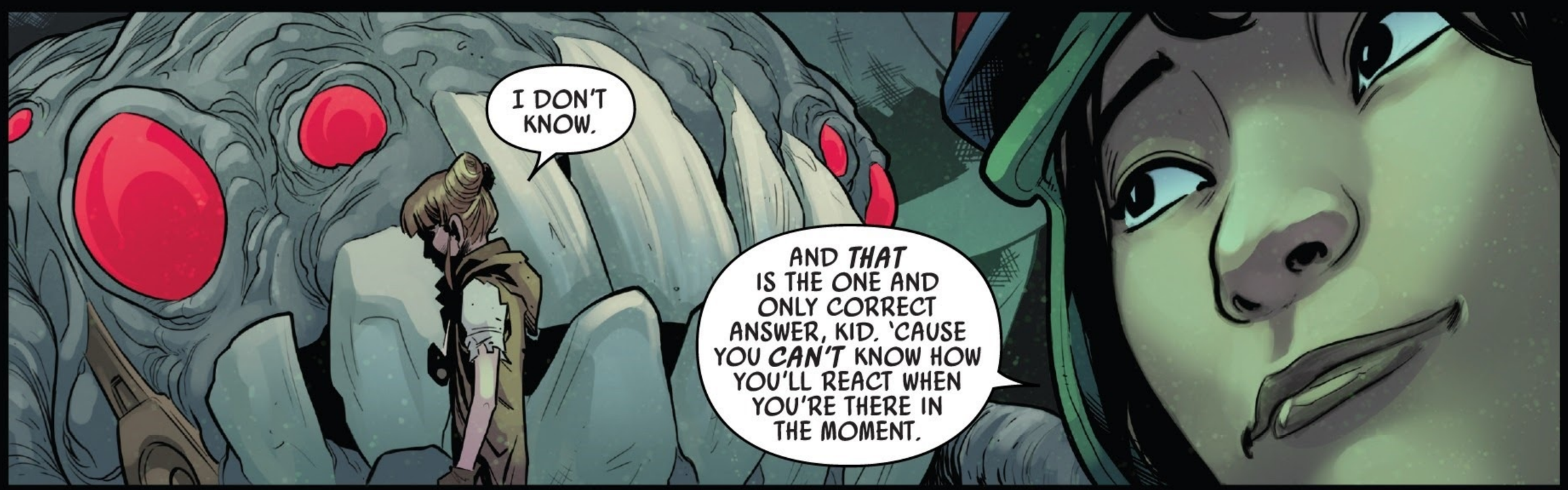

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GET RICH.
SAVE OWN SKIN.
DAMN EVERYONE ELSE.
SHE'S ONE OF THE EVERYONE ELSES?
MMHM. I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF SHE'S STILL ALIVE.
NOTHING IN THE LOCAL REGISTRY, AND--
DAMN. NOTHING ON THE IMPERIAL HOLONET EITHER.
=SIGH=

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SURRENDER, CRIMINAL SCUM. JUSTICE HAS YOU NOW.

THERE'S NO WAY OUT.

HE'S RIGHT. W-WE'RE A DOZEN KILOMETERS FROM THE NEAREST STILT-ISLAND. THERE'S NOTHING BELOW US BUT GAS.

HOW DID THEY FIND US?

WHAT A SPLENDIDLY IRRELEVANT QUESTION. I'LL JUST CONTEMPLATE CONFRONTATION STRATEGIES ALL ON MY OWN, SHALL I?

CONFRONTATION?! TRIP, WE DON'T EVEN HAVE THAT STUPID LITTLE GUN ANYMORE! WE'RE OUT OF OPTIONS!

AS ALWAYS, DEAR CHELLI, YOU ARE QUITE--QUITE--MISTAKEN.

MEDIOCRE UPHOLDERS OF DREARY LOCAL LEGISLATION! PLEASE LISTEN CAREFULLY!

YOU WILL WITHDRAW ENTIRELY AND IMMEDIATELY, OR I SHALL BE CERTAIN THAT THIS PRECIOUS INFANT SHRIEKS ACCUSATIONS OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AT YOU WHILE SHE PERISHES IN UNUTTERABLE PAIN OVER THE COURSE OF SEVERAL DAYS.

GEEZ, TRIP...

H-HE'S RIGHT, Y'KNOW. YOU WERE MISTAKEN.

I FOUND YOUR STUPID LITTLE GUN.

ZOT

WZZZTK! WT WT WT--

K-KID, WHAT'RE Y--

S-SORRY LADY, BUT...YOU OUGHTA KNOW. THERE'S A REWARD FOR YOU BOTH.

I-IF I DIDN'T GET IT, SOMEONE ELSE WOULDA. WHOLE OF MILVAYNE'S TUNED IN BY NOW.

YOU... YOU SOLD US OUT?

I'M SORRY. BUT--I AM STILL YOUNG. AND IF I GOT ANY CHANCE OF GETTING OLD, I GOTTA EAT.

BUT... BUT WE BONDED!

To Be Continued!

DOCTOR APHRA
NEXT ISSUE:
A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away is a lot easier to get to than you think! Write us at StarWars@Marvel.com to make it into a future letters page. Mark your notes "OKAY TO PRINT." If the Force is truly strong with you—tweet us! #aphracomic and #oktoprint